



# Fine Lines

NEWSLETTER - VOLUME 31

SEPTEMBER, 2013

CHESTER DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY



## WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The start of each programme year is full of expectations.

Our 10 wonderful lectures, inspiring visits and study days all help to create a deeper understanding of the decorative arts in all its forms. Some of the members are even off to Istanbul this October in order to widen their knowledge.

Last September we faced changes with the move to double sessions, it proved to be very successful. New members have joined this year so it would seem we are offering what the members require.

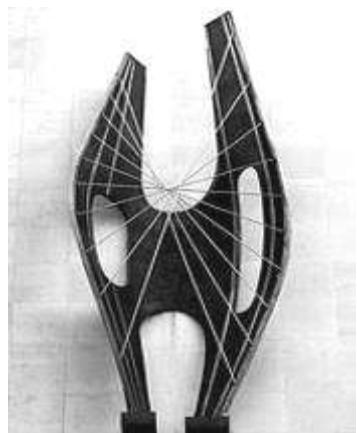
Do have a good read of this newsletter; there is something for everyone.

Once again we shall be putting on an evening lecture in January and a social event for all the members in early summer, details of these will be given to you, as the time gets nearer.

It was lovely to welcome so many members to the luncheon last April; it was a good venue with an excellent lunch and the added attraction of a talk by Frances Hughes. For those of you who would like to hear further from Frances do look out for the March trip to the Garrick Club in London, details are on the back page.

This feels the right place for me to thank all our brilliant volunteers and helpers who make our society such a friendly and welcoming one. So I do hope you have all had a superb summer break and are ready to enjoy what we, the committee, have planned for you.

Linda



## Chester DFAS visit to The Hepworth Gallery, Wakefield and The Yorkshire Sculpture Park - report from Shelia Pemberton

A lovely fine day certainly made its contribution to the enjoyment of our party of members during a June visit to Wakefield. At The Hepworth, a team of three of highly enthusiastic and well-informed young members of the curatorial staff took our party around the galleries. They told us the story of the gallery, pointed out paintings and sculpture of interest and described Barbara Hepworth's method of direct carving in plaster that became the main direction of her work. This involved the pioneering piercing of the block,

which also coincided with experiments in collage, photograms and prints. Of special importance among the full-sized working models were Hepworth's '*Winged Figure*' (see above) and '*Crucifixion*'.

Our party divided into two at the Sculpture Park and two able young guides gave us the choice of a landscape tour and, for those of us daunted by the hilly terrain, we were guided by Alex who chose two of Sophie Ryder's Hares, '*Molecule Man 1+1+1*' (see right) by Jonathan Brodsky and '*Tomato*' by Joan Miro that were amongst his personal favourites.



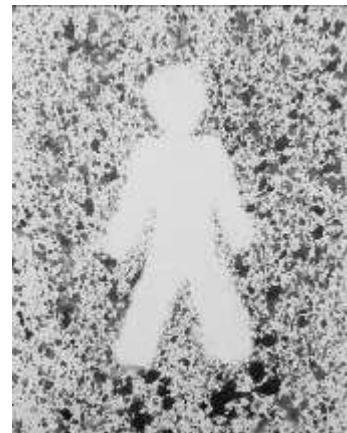
The most extensive exhibition in the UK, FABRIC-CATION, by Anglo-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare MBE, was seen by some of the party in the Underground Gallery. FABRIC-ATION features over thirty works, including sculpture, film, photography and painting. They include flying machines, aliens, toy paintings, food fairies, revolutionary children, spacemen and a ballerina. Close inspection was afforded of a wardrobe of Victorian children's dresses on hangers. It comprised expensive clothing made of cheap material bought in the marketplace and was named 'Little Rich Girl,' a vision of excessive show.

## Young Arts Event -

*Report from Cathy Rounthewaite.*

Having funded several school based projects, the Committee felt our next project should be in the volunteer sector, where external funding is extremely important and Chester DFAS Young Arts' current project is with Chester Young Carers. The Young Carers charity works with young people who have responsibilities within the home caring for parents with mental health problems, who misuse drugs or alcohol or they are caring for family members with physical disabilities. Their aim is to enable children to be children. Up to 80 children meet each week at four centres in Chester, Northwich, Ellesmere Port and Crewe for activities - many of which are art based.

The volunteer co-ordinator was very enthusiastic and suggested we organise a project where the young people produced artwork to a brief which could then be exhibited for the Young Carers and their families to see. In March our Young Arts fund provided small canvases 5" x 7", plastic palettes and paintbrushes for 80 young people, plus paint for each centre and set the brief for each to paint a canvas representing in some way what it is to be a Young Carer. 50 of these canvases were displayed in Wesley Methodist Church in St John Street, Chester, as part of an exhibition featuring a new work by Derbyshire Artist Michael Cook "An Idle Tale". As the project was so successful and the young people wanted it to continue, we have provided a further 80 canvases for the summer term. Chester Young Carers had been part of the St John Ambulance Brigade but, in May, became a charity in its own right and these 160 canvases were to be used as part of the launch. I am also in the process of finding other places in the area where these works can be shown to raise awareness of the charity.



## CHURCH TRAILS - VOLUNTEERS WANTED

A NADFAS Church Trail is a questionnaire for children aged 8 to 12, but is really for people of all ages! The trail guides the participant around a church looking at the architecture, history and furnishings. A corresponding answer sheet is provided for accompanying adults. The aim is to encourage both children and adults to explore the building, to learn about it and enjoy the experience so that they are inspired to visit other churches.

The trail may be used by children's groups, by families visiting the church, by clergy and staff and with schools. One incumbent, using half the trail with a class and then inviting the parents to finish the trail with their children, announced that he had learned "*so much about his church from the NADFAS Trail!*" The questionnaire is an A4, black and white, two-sided sheet in a child-friendly design. The simplicity of this format keeps reproduction costs to the absolute minimum. The answers, on two sides of A4, are knowledgeable and properly researched.

When a trail has been designed and tested, a CD and hard copy of the questions and answers will be presented to the church to use, as it wants. Your Society bears the initial cost of making the trail and setting it up in the church. The church would then fund the maintenance of supplies of the trail. A small, 3 or 4 person sub-committee would be given training in order to set up a church trail. If you have experience of church recording, or you have taught at primary school level you would be the ideal volunteer. **Linda Hill**



**'I don't know much about art, but ...'**  
**An Introduction to Modern Art took place on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2013**  
**Lecturer : Michael Howard - report from Karen Bowling**

**'I don't know much about art but ...'** proved to be a relatively unstructured lecture day in the sense that the audience was encouraged to participate throughout with comments, observations and discussion. Beginning with the earliest creative cave art, 25,000 years ago, the lecture moved on to cover early religious art, which catered for the spiritual needs of the populace through successive artistic periods finishing in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The last 20 years being left for a possible future lecture...

As the importance of religious art waned, artists began to depict scenes more relevant to everyday life and by the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century they were drawn to produce, not necessarily a purely accurate visual representation in painting, but an additional dimension; this in an attempt to energize experience by experimentation with style and colour. After World War 1, there was a temporary return to painting as a means of recording important or massive events. However this waned with the artistic rebellion of the 1960's. Today, since patronage for art does not exist in the traditional sense, the artist is free to push the boundaries of creativity. Not all contemporary art is necessarily aesthetically pleasing. It may shock, it may require thought, it can be seen as '*interesting*'. It needs to incorporate something with which we can identify and art is thus interpreted through our imagination. Annie Trevor Jones provided the tasty lunch. All in all this was a vibrant and unusual Study Day.



In June the **HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS** took time off from the Records Office to visit Speke Hall. Sheila Pemberton, a regular guide at Speke and one of our own DFAS committee, guided us through the history of this Tudor timber framed house. The ownership of the estate started with the Norris family whose fortunes fluctuated during the reformation and the civil war due to their religion. Ownership then, by marriage, passed to the Beauclerk family who sold it in 1795 to Richard Watt whose descendants had major restoration work done to the house. The last owner Adelaide Watts moved in in 1878 and lived there until her death. The black and white timber framed building, Speke Hall, was built during various periods around its courtyard. The main entrance has an "eavesdrop" to listen to the conversation of people waiting to be admitted. One of the chief rooms whose timbers were felled in 1530 is the Great Hall, off it is the Great Parlour with a Jacobean floral plasterwork ceiling. Most of the house reflects the Victorian style. A priest hole is to be seen on one of the upper long galleries. The last owner Adelaide Watts did much for the estate by creating a farm complex but, by the Second World War, most of the land had been sold and to become Liverpool Airport.

# Dates for your Diary

**27 March 2014!**  
**Visit the Garrick Club**  
with NADFAS art and art history lecturer  
Frances Hughes  
Tickets priced £18  
(*Transport is not included*)

The Garrick Club houses the largest, most significant collection of British theatrical works of art with over 1000 paintings, drawings and pieces of sculpture on display. Many literary, theatrical and artistic personalities of the last two centuries were members, including Dickens, Thackeray, Henry Irving, W S Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. It is still, a "gentlemen only" private club.

[visits@chesterdfas.org.uk](mailto:visits@chesterdfas.org.uk)

**NEW MEMBERS COFFEE MORNING**  
All new members of Chester DFAS, who have joined the Society this summer, will receive an invitation to meet the Committee at a Coffee Morning to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2013.  
We hope that this event returns as an annual event.

[memsec@chesterdfas.org.uk](mailto:memsec@chesterdfas.org.uk)

**A Study Day is to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2013**

**A Day of Fabulous Books**  
**Venue: the newly furbished Liverpool City Library**

Dominic Riley will lead us in a day that will include a lecture, a demonstration of bookbinding techniques, rare books, conservation and comments on bindings of books brought along by participants. The day will begin at 10 a.m. with light refreshments and include a light lunch. We aim to conclude at 4.00 p.m.

We will make our own way to the library, which is very close to Lime Street station. The day will cost £35 and tickets will be available from the September meeting

[studysec@chesterdfas.org.uk](mailto:studysec@chesterdfas.org.uk)

**CHESTER DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS EVENING LECTURE to be held on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 at 7.00 p.m.**  
**Venue: THE GROSVENOR MUSEUM**  
**"From Coalbrookdale to the Crystal Palace: Art, Design and the Industrial Revolution."**  
**Lecturer: Jo Walton** (*Tickets will be on sale at lectures from October to January*)  
[progsec@chesterdfas.org.uk](mailto:progsec@chesterdfas.org.uk)

**A Study Day is to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2014**

**Linda Smith will lead the day entitled 'Great Tarts in Art: High Culture and the Oldest Profession'**

Linda Smith is an art historian and this talk very much takes the form of a social history: carefully placing the works of art in their proper historical context.

[studysec@chesterdfas.org.uk](mailto:studysec@chesterdfas.org.uk)

**To celebrate 40 years of volunteering**

NADFAS is holding a volunteering festival at Kensington Town Hall on 12<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2013. |

Church Recorders, Heritage Volunteers & Young Arts will be represented.

This is an opportunity for existing volunteers and those interested in joining to come along to a practical day of talks and demonstrations.

[www.nadfas.org.uk/news/rising-to-the-challenge](http://www.nadfas.org.uk/news/rising-to-the-challenge)

**Life & Death – Stories of Norton Priory on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 to be held at Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool.** Speakers include Tom Holland, Author & T.V. Presenter, Dr. Abram, Lecturer in Medieval History, and many more.

For tickets (£35, £25 concessions inc. buffet lunch) call 01928 569895 or visit

[www.nortonpriory.org](http://www.nortonpriory.org).

[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime)

Please note that refunds are not available unless a replacement can be found.

Editor – [Janet Palmer](mailto:Janet.Palmer)